



City of Somerville

URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION

City Hall 3rd Floor, 93 Highland Avenue, Somerville MA 02143

MAY 25, 2021 MEETING MINUTES

This meeting was conducted via remote participation on GoToWebinar.

NAME	TITLE	STATUS	ARRIVED
Sarah Lewis	Co-Chair	<i>Present</i>	
Cortney Kirk	Acting Co-Chair	<i>Present</i>	
Frank Valdes	Member	<i>Present</i>	
Deborah Fennick	Member	<i>Present</i>	
Andrew Arbaugh	Member	<i>Present</i>	
Tim Talun	Member	<i>Absent</i>	

The meeting was held via GoToWebinar and was called to order by Co-Chair, Sarah Lewis at 6:03pm and adjourned at 8:54pm. As authorized by the Somerville Zoning Ordinance, Co-Chair & Director of Public Space & Urban Forestry Luisa Oliveira designated Cortney Kirk to serve as Co-Chair in her place for this meeting.

GENERAL BUSINESS: Meeting Minutes

Following a motion by Member Fennick, seconded by Member Arbaugh, the Commission voted unanimously (4-0) to continue this order of business until the next regularly scheduled meeting.

PUBLIC MEETING: 74 Middlesex - Building

Member Talun recused himself.

David Manfredi presented for the applicant team. The proposal is a Life Science building in the Assembly Row neighborhood. Three massing options were presented, with Option 3 being the preferred option with a two-story base. Mr. Manfredi then presented the Level 1 floor plan, including the connection to the Civic Space, as well as the typical floor plan for the other floors.

Three façade options for the middle portion of the building were presented, with Option 3 preferred by the applicant team. There were two-levels of mechanical penthouse space, with three options presented to the Commission. Three base options were presented by Mr. Manfredi, with Option 3 being the preferred option. The team went further into the base design detail by presenting three main entry options, with Option 3 being preferred. Two different canopy options were presented. The canopy was used to reinforce the geometry and massing of the building. The storefront options change with signage. The materiality of the building was largely made up of a granite base with a wood soffit under the canopy, metal panels, and a glass body.

The building is expected to be LEED Platinum.

Mikyoung Kim presented the landscape/public realm plan. The aim was to create a vibrant streetscape and to use all native, low VOC plants, with all-season interests. A green roof was proposed for the top floor. The building canopy will also incorporate green roof plantings. Outdoor flexible seating will be including under the canopy, as well as bike parking. The Green Score is expected to exceed the minimum.

The Commission and applicant team discussed the massing options, façade options, and penthouse materiality further. They also spoke about the base, canopy, and entry of the building. The location of the bike room, the ability to maintain the green buffer along Middlesex Ave, and the cohesion of the overall landscaping of the area were also discussed.

Following a motion by Member Fennick, seconded by Member Valdes, the Commission voted unanimously (4-0) to recommend Massing Option 3.

Following a motion by Member Fennick, seconded by Member Valdes, the Commission voted unanimously (4-0) to recommend Base Option 3.

Following a motion by Member Fennick, seconded by Member Valdes, the Commission voted unanimously (4-0) to recommend Canopy Option 3.

Following a motion by Member Fennick, seconded by Member Valdes, the Commission voted unanimously (4-0) to recommend Storefront Signage Option 3.

The Commission decided to wait to vote on the façade option and penthouse design option. The Commission will also wait to vote on the design guidelines and to incorporate additional design feedback.

This case will be continued to a future meeting date.

RESULT:

CONTINUED

PUBLIC MEETING: 74 Middlesex - Civic Space

Mikyoung Kim and Jennifer Chalos presented for the applicant team. The aim was to create an inclusive, multigenerational Civic Space that is flexible and programmable. The design incorporated ways to reduce pollution from I-93 and Middlesex Ave, improve air quality, and integrate comments from the engagement process with constituents. Ms. Kim walked the Commission through the Civic Space design and the potential programming, including ideas such as water features, a chalk art area, a play space, movable seating options, and a layered strategy for lighting. The team is committed to increase vegetation and include all native, year-round species.

The Commission and applicant team discussed the bike/pedestrian path, the two paved through spaces, the connection between the building and the Civic Space, the placement of the trellis structure, and the lack of color in the design.

The Commission asked the application team to further develop the design with relation to the interconnectedness and cohesion of the space; especially the bike/pedestrian path connection to the Civic Space, how the space works with the building, and overall color/design.

This case will be continued to a future meeting date.

RESULT:

CONTINUED

NOTICE: These minutes constitute a summary of the votes and key discussions at this meeting. To review a full recording, please contact the Planning & Zoning Division at planning@somervillema.